DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 427 543 FL 025 739

AUTHOR Forster, Douglas E.; Karn, Richard
TITLE Teaching TOEIC/TOEFL Test-Taking Strategies.
PUB DATE 1998-03-20
NOTE 51p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (32nd, Seattle, WA, March 17-21, 1998).
PUB TYPE Guides - Classroom - Teacher (052) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Classroom Techniques; *English (Second Language); Foreign Countries; *Listening Comprehension; Listening Comprehension Tests; Listening Skills; *Reading Comprehension; Reading Instruction; Second Language Instruction; Skill Development; *Standardized Tests; Test Construction; *Test Wiseness
IDENTIFIERS Asia; *Test of English as a Foreign Language; *Test of English for International Communication

ABSTRACT

Teaching strategies are outlined for teachers of English as a second language to use in improving students' listening and reading comprehension skills specifically for two standardized tests: the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) and the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). The strategies presented are not intended to be specific to any one section of the tests, but can be applied throughout both tests. First, overviews are given of the formats of the TOEIC and TOEFL, the importance attached to students' test results in foreign countries, particularly Asia, and similarities and differences in the two forms of assessment. Then test-taking strategies to be taught are outlined, including general strategies and those specific to listening comprehension, structure, written expression, and reading comprehension, taking into account the way items in each area are constructed. Communicative activities relevant to the structure, written expression, and reading comprehension sub-units are also discussed briefly. (Contains 10 references.) (MSE)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

Teaching TOEIC/TOEFL Test-taking Strategies

Douglas E. Forster & Richard Karn
Japan Women's University & Niigata University of Management

ED 427 543

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to provide EFL/ESL instructors with teaching strategies to improve a student's TOEIC/TOEFL listening and reading comprehension test-taking skills as well as their overall English language communicative competency. This paper was originally presented at *TESOL '98: 32nd Annual Convention and Exposition* in Seattle, Washington on March 20, 1998. The strategies presented here were previously published in a textbook for use in Japan: *Strategies 1: Building TOEIC/TOEFL Test-Taking Skills* (Forster, Karn, Suzuki & Tateyama, 1997), and should be supplemented by TOEIC and/or TOEFL practice tests which are readily available. The strategies presented here are not specific to any one section of the TOEIC/TOEFL but should be applied throughout both tests. What we have attempted is to present each strategy in a context which is readily understood by the student.

TOEIC/TOEFL Overview

The TOEIC has seven parts and is divided into two general sections: Listening Comprehension and Reading Comprehension. Each general section tests specific skills. The Listening Comprehension section contains four parts: 1) Part I tests the ability to tell the difference between correct and incorrect descriptions of what is happening in a photograph; 2) Part II tests the ability to answer questions asked in English; 3) Part III tests the ability to grasp general and specific information in a short conversational; and 4) Part IV tests the ability to understand the general meaning of a short talk or lecture. The Reading Comprehension Section contains three parts: 1) Part V tests basic, sentence-level grammar; 2) Part VI tests the ability to identify basic grammatical errors in short phrases and sentences; and 3) Part VII tests general reading comprehension. See Table 1 below.

FL 025139

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Douglas Forster
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Table 1: TOEIC Format

I. SECTION 1: LISTENING COMPREHENSION
(Time: 45 minutes; 100 questions)

Part I:	Picture	(20 questions)
Part II:	Question/Response	(30 questions)
Part III:	Short Conversations	(30 questions)
Part IV:	Short Talks	(20 questions)

II. SECTION 2: READING
(Time: 75 minutes; 100 questions)

Part V:	Incomplete Sentences	(40 questions)
Part VI:	Error Recognition	(20 questions)
Part VII:	Reading Comprehension	(40 questions)

The TOEFL has six parts and is divided into three general sections: Listening Comprehension, Structure and Written Expression, and Reading Comprehension. Each general section tests specific skills. The Listening Comprehension section contains three parts: 1) Part A tests the ability to understand specific questions about what was said in brief conversations between two people; 2) Part B tests the ability to answer general questions about what was said in short conversations between two people; and 3) Part C tests the ability to answer general questions about the information in longer conversations and short talks or lectures. The Structure and Written Expression Section contains two parts: 1) Part A tests the ability to complete sentences in grammatically correct written English, and 2) Part B tests the ability to identify errors in sentences. The Reading Comprehension Section contains only one part. This part tests the ability to understand both what is stated and implied in the readings. See Table 2 below.

Table 2: TOEFL Format

I. SECTION 1: LISTENING COMPREHENSION
(Time: 30 minutes; 50 questions)

Part A:	Short Conversations	(30 questions)
Part B:	Longer Conversations	(8 questions)
Part C:	Oral Readings	(12 questions)

II. SECTION 2: STRUCTURE AND WRITTEN EXPRESSION
(Time: 25 minutes; 40 questions)

Part A:	Multiple choice answers to incomplete sentences	(15 questions)
Part B:	Error Recognition (Sentences with 4 words or phrases underlined)	(25 questions)

III. SECTION 3: READING COMPREHENSION
(Time: 55 minutes; 50 questions)

Generally 5 reading passages followed by 10 questions each.

The Importance of TOEIC & TOEFL

The importance of TOEIC test scores can be seen most clearly in Asia, particularly in Japan and Korea (See Table 3 below). In fact, the establishment of the TOEIC test was a Japanese initiative. According to an article published in The Daily Yomiuri:

> In 1979, when many Japanese corporations were beginning to pay more attention to developments overseas, a company representative approached the Educational Testing Service (ETS) and asked it to develop a test that could be used specifically to judge the English communication abilities of those expected to use English in their jobs. Where the TOEIC differs from the TOEFL is the fact that business leaders tend to use the TOEIC to judge the ability of their employees whereas the TOEFL is used by universities in North America to screen their foreign student applicants.
>
> The three most common reasons for administering the TOEIC are to: 1) Screen employees for overseas business trips or postings; 2) Urge workers to make greater efforts to learn English; and 3) Assess the effectiveness of company-sponsored English training programs. Over 70-percent of Japanese companies surveyed said that they expect an employee to score over 600 out of a maximum 990 points before being considered for an assignment overseas. ("TOEIC Assesses English Language Skills," 1997, p. 9).

An additional article printed in The Daily Yomiuri states:

> More and more Japanese companies are using the TOEIC as a means of evaluating and training staff members. In fact, more than 1,700 Japanese firms

now use the TOEIC for various purposes, including training programs for new recruits, preparation for business trips abroad, and eligibility for overseas study programs. Major companies such as Canon Inc., Matsushita Electric (Panasonic), and NEC Corp. make it compulsory for staff members to obtain certain TOEIC scores.

But it is not only in Japan that the importance of the TOEIC test can be seen. The TOEIC test has become recognized in over 50 countries as the most reliable test of English communication skills, and the number of TOEIC examinees continues to rise. More than 4 million people have sat for the exam by the end of fiscal 1996. Of course, the best way to improve linguistic ability, regardless of cost and time, is to travel overseas. However, the TOEIC test has proven to be a quick, cost effective and reliable tool to check the linguistic skill of staff members so that firms can determine employee's study efforts. ("TOEIC: Key Gauge of Communication Skills," 1997, p. 11).

Table 3: TOEIC Examinees

	REGION	FY 1995-96	FY 1996-97	
1)	Korea	636,879	728,739	(+91,860)
2)	Japan	553,319	598,534	(+45,215)
3)	Europe	22,170	31,237	(+11,067)
4)	Asia	16,315	33,073	(+16,758)
5)	North America	9,631	20,637	(+11,006)
6)	Latin America	2,552	5,696	(+3,144)
7)	Other	1,166	745	(-421)
	TOTAL:	1,242,032	1,418,661	(+176,629)

("Updates," 1997, p. 4)

According to ETS:

The purpose of the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) is to evaluate the English proficiency of people whose native language is not English. The test was initially developed by ETS to measure the English proficiency of international students wishing to study at colleges and universities in the United States and Canada, and this continues to be its primary function. However, a number of academic institutions in other countries, as well as certain

independent organizations, agencies, and foreign governments, have also found the test scores useful. ("Overview," 1997, p. 7)

Like the TOEIC test, the TOEFL test is particularly popular in Asia. See Table 4 below.

Table 4: Top 5 Countries (Number of TOEFL Examinees) July, 1996 through June, 1997

COUNTRY	EXAMINEES	AVERAGE SCORE
China	152,731	532
Japan	152,234	496
Korea	113,843	518
Thailand	49,880	494
Spain	40,859	550

("Overview," 1997, p. 5).

The TOEFL Test & Score Manual states:

> It should be pointed out that the TOEFL test is only a measure of general English proficiency. It is not a test of academic aptitude or of subject matter competence, nor is it a direct test of English speaking or writing ability. TOEFL test scores can assist in determining whether an applicant has attained sufficient proficiency in English to study at a college or university. However, even though an applicant may achieve a high TOEFL score, the student who is not academically prepared may not easily succeed in a given program of study. Therefore, determination of academic admissibility of nonnative English speakers is dependent upon numerous additional factors, such as previous academic record, other institution(s) attended, level and field of study, and motivation. ("Use of TOEFL Test Scores," 1997, p. 25)

TOEIC/TOEFL Similarities & Differences

Both the TOEIC and the TOEFL test listening and reading comprehension proficiency of North American English, and although the tests differ in some respects, both tests can be taught simultaneously to increase not only test scores, but students' overall English language proficiency--particularly listening. In addition, there are a variety of communicative activities that can be employed while teaching the tests that

will help improve students' speaking ability, as well as their understanding of the language used in both tests. These activities will be explained later.

The main differences between the TOEIC and the TOEFL are that the TOEIC test is used to determine North American English proficiency of employees in the business world; thus, heavy emphasis is placed on business English. The TOEFL, on the other hand, functions primarily as a measure of the North American English proficiency of international students wishing to study at colleges and universities in the U.S. and Canada; therefore, emphasis is placed on academic English.

However, the similarities far outweigh the differences and thus enable an instructor to teach both tests together. First, both the TOEIC and the TOEFL test listening comprehension of North American English. Part III of TOEIC and Section 1, Part A of TOEFL, test listening comprehension based on short conversations. After listening to a short conversation between two people, students answer multiple choice questions which are written in the TOEIC and spoken in the TOEFL. The answers are written in both tests.

Both Part IV of the TOEIC and Part C of the TOEFL test the ability to understand extended spoken material in English. The short talks in Part IV of the TOEIC consist mainly of commercial advertisements, public service advertisements and announcements, news stories, and the language used in business settings. The content of the short talks in Part C of the TOEFL usually consist of announcements, lectures, explanations, informative talks, or news summaries on a variety of subjects. Many of these short talks are presented as representations of the language found in a university lecture hall.

There are two main differences between Part IV of the TOEIC, Part IV and Part C of the TOEFL. The first difference is that in the TOEIC, you are provided with both the questions and the possible answers for the short talk to follow; in the TOEFL, however, you are provided only with the possible answers. The second difference is in the subject matter: the subjects of the TOEIC short talks tend to cover what may be loosely categorized as business-related subjects while the TOEFL tends to lean more

towards academic subjects. In addition, the TOEIC short talks generally range from 35 to 150 words, whereas the TOEFL ranges from approximately 75 to 450 words.

Second, both the TOEIC and the TOEFL test structure, written expression, and reading comprehension proficiency of North American English. Part V of the TOEIC and Section 2, Part A of the TOEFL, test grammar proficiency at the sentence level by completing sentences from multiple choice answers so that they are grammatically correct.

Both Part VI of the TOEIC, and Section 2, Part B of the TOEFL, test various grammatical structures on the word and phrase level. These include: adjectives and adverbs, articles, comparative, compound, and superlative adjectives, embedded questions, parallel structures, prepositions, relative pronouns, redundancy, subject-verb agreement, verb form, and word form and order. The format of both tests is identical.

Both Part VII of the TOEIC and Section 3 of the TOEFL test reading comprehension. However, Part VII of the TOEIC tests your ability to read and understand a variety of various "everyday" English material, such as advertisements, announcements, business reports, charts, forms, news articles, and letters. The TOEFL, on the other hand, tests your ability to read and understand readings of an "academic" nature; for example: the arts, biology, history, and science, etc. In both tests, you must answer several questions based on the readings.

In addition to the similarities shown in the above examples, both the TOEIC and the TOEFL test English used in everyday conversations and situations, including idiomatic, slang, and colloquial expressions, and these provide a basis for greatly improving students' understanding of vocabulary in use. (Forster et al., 1997, p. 2)

General Test-taking Strategies

Before teaching specific test-taking strategies for the TOEIC and TOEFL, it is important to provide the following general strategies to help test-takers improve their performance in each section of the tests. Regarding the Listening Comprehension sections of the TOEIC and TOEFL, you should understand the directions to each

section of the test before taking the test. This is necessary because if you already know the directions for each section, you can use the time provided for reading the directions to read ahead. It should be stressed that as much as possible, one should try to stay ahead of the tape. Next, you should not try to understand everything that is said. A "general" understanding is sufficient, but you should take special note of contractions, count/non-count nouns, and the meaning and tense of verbs.
(Forster et al., 1997, p. 3)

For the structure, Written Expression and Reading Comprehension sections of the TOEIC and TOEFL, it is again important to understand the directions prior to taking the test and always try to read ahead, making mental notes of immediate answers that come to mind. In both tests, for both Listening Comprehension and Reading Comprehension, time is of the essence. Therefore, you should not allow any one question or reading to take up too much time because it will take away from the time left for the remaining questions. In addition, you should use the last minute of the allotted time to fill in the blanks remaining on the answer sheet with a pre-determined letter chosen as the "guess' response. Statistically, answers B and C are the most common correct answers; therefore, if you do not know the answer to a particular question, you should simply mark B or C and move on. Furthermore, you should never leave a blank answer. Finally, if a vocabulary word is not understood, you should use the other words in the sentences to recognize the context in which the word is being used; by doing so, you can often determine the correct meaning of the word.
(Forster et al., 1997, p. 9)

Specific Test-taking Strategies (Listening Comprehension)

Before deciding which specific test-taking strategies to teach for the listening comprehension sections of the TOEIC and TOEFL, the instructor should begin by giving a complete practice test to diagnose which problems the students are having with a particular section of one of the tests. From our experience teaching both the TOEIC and the TOEFL, the following strategies have proven effective improving student test scores.

In Part I of the TOEIC, each question consists of one picture in the test booklet and four sentences (A, B, C, and D) on tape. Only one of the sentences correctly describes the picture and the test-takers hear each sentence only one time and must choose the letter of the sentence that best describes the picture. When answering questions in this section, you must remember to use your time wisely and never spend so much time on one question that it forces you to miss the next question. In addition, you must learn to eliminate incorrect answers as you hear them.

The first strategy focuses on answering the questions: "Who?" "What?" "Where?" and "How?" First, you should determine "who" is in the picture, including their gender and occupation. Second, you should determine "what" is in the picture and make a mental list of everything they see in the picture. Third, you should determine "how many" people or objects are in the picture and differentiate between count and non-count nouns. Next, you should determine "what is happening" in the picture and "how is it being done," paying attention to verbs and tense. Finally, you should determine "where" the picture was taken; that is, the location, and have a solid understanding of prepositions. (Forster et al., 1997, p. 4)

The second strategy focuses on determining time. Both the TOEIC and the TOEFL frequently ask you to determine the time at which something occurred in a sequence of events. Two basic indicators of the time at which something occurred are the verb tense and words which mark one time in relation to a second time. Verb tense generally indicates when the action of a sentence occurs: past, present or future. In contrast, some words and phrases indicate the specific time one event occurs in relation to a second event. For example, consider the sentence: "The secretary finished typing the memo *before* she went to lunch." In this case, the word "before" clearly shows the sequence of events. First, the secretary finished typing the memo; second, she went to lunch. See Table 5 below for a list of words and the times they indicate.

Table 5: Words that Determine Time

Occurred Before	Occurred During	Occurred After
already	as	after
before	as soon as	afterwards
no later than	during	and
preceding	when	following
prior to	while	once
until		then

(Forster, et al., 1997, p. 9)

The third strategy focuses on homonyms and similar sounding words. Perhaps the most difficult part of the listening sections of the TOEIC and the TOEFL involves understanding the meaning of words that sound exactly alike but have different meanings (homonyms), and distinguishing between words that have very similar sounds. The only sure way to prepare for these confusing questions is to listen carefully and pay close attention to the way the words are used in the sentences. This requires that you listen to the context of a word in a sentence and this is often difficult for even native speakers. The way, or context, in which a word is used will give you clues to understand the meaning. See Table 6 below.

Table 6: Homonyms & Similar Sounding Words

HOMONYMS		SIMILAR SOUND	
bare	bear	back	bag
bough	bow	coat	code
dew	due	dip	deep
feat	feet	fun	phone
for	four	gone	gun
mail	male	leaf	leave
plain	plane	knot	nod
scene	seen	saber	savor
stake	steak	towel	tower
wait	weight	weed	wheat

(Forster et al., 1997, p. 14)

Part II of the TOEIC tests the ability to understand questions that are spoken in English and the ability to choose the appropriate answer from the three possibilities. You must be able to understand what kind of question is being asked and what kind of answer it requires, and demonstrate a basic understanding of colloquial and idiomatic English, particularly when it is used in brief, or seemingly incomplete, answers.

When answering questions in this section, you must remember that you cannot read ahead in this section of the TOEIC. However, you must never allow yourself to get behind. You should never allow a slow response in choosing the answer to one problem force you to miss the question to the next problem. There is only ten seconds to choose the correct answer to each question in the problem; therefore, you should try to answer the question in six to eight seconds and then use the remaining time to prepare for the next problem by "clearing" your mind of the last problem. By the time the voice on the tape recording announces the next problem, you should have put the last problem behind you. Furthermore, you should not allow frustration from one problem to carry over to the next problem.
(Forster et al., 1997, p. 25)

The first strategy for Part II of the TOEIC is to recognize questions that ask for information. There are three general categories of questions which request information: 1) Questions which begin with "who," "what," "where," "when," or "how," such as: "When did you graduate from high school?" If a question begins with one of these key words, specific information about a person, thing, place, time, or an explanation is required. Answers providing a "yes" or "no" answer may be eliminated immediately, and usually answers which are general or vague in nature can also be eliminated; 2) Questions which give you a choice between two answers, such as: "Is he buying a computer or a word processor?" Usually these kinds of questions include key words which signal that a choice must be made, such as "either," "or," "neither" and "nor." The correct answer to this type of question usually includes either one of the two choices or, occasionally, both choices. Answers which do not mention one of the two choices can be eliminated unless an answer is heard which includes the word "both"; 3) Questions which demand that you confirm or deny what is being asked, which means that you are essentially answering "yes" or "no." Usually, these types of questions make a statement and then add a short phrase which turns it into a question, such as: "Paul's going to Europe next week, isn't he?" These types of questions often end in a combination of a form of the verb "to be," "to do," or "to have," and a

subjective pronoun (you, he, she, it, we, they). Since the question asks for a basic agreement or disagreement, answers which contain specific information may be eliminated. (Forster et al., p. 26).

You must also be able to recognize direct questions. These types of questions frequently begin with words such as "can," "could," "would," "should," and "may" (modal verbs), a form of the verb, "to do," or the words, "why" or "how." Furthermore, these types of questions usually, but not always (as in the case of "you" being implied), include the word, "you," which is how one can distinguish this type of question from those discussed in the previous strategy. Questions like these are generally of two kinds: 1) questions that ask you to do things, and 2) questions that ask for your preference or opinion. The first question type asks you to do things and appears in four varieties: requests, offers, invitations and suggestions. For example: "Will you meet me before class tomorrow?" (request); "May I give you a ride home?" (offer); "Would you like to go to the museum?" (invitation); and "Why don't we go to a basketball game?" (suggestion). These types of questions require a limited response, essentially demanding that one answer "yes" or "no." Consequently, answers providing off-topic, or detailed information, may be eliminated.

Both preference and opinion questions may be answered in three ways. Preference questions generally offer a choice between two things, and the answer will be one of those two choices unless a completely negative or affirmative response is offered in their place. For example: "Do you want to travel by bus or train?" (preference). The answer to this question can be either "bus," "train," or a completely different answer which is on-topic, such as "I've decided not to go," or "I'd prefer to fly." Therefore, this question can only be answered in three ways, so answers providing a positive or negative response, or detailed information, may be eliminated.

The most difficult type of question in Part II of the TOEIC asks for an opinion. Questions asking for an opinion about a subject can be identified by the way they include phrases such as, "you feel," "you think," "you like," "your thoughts," or "your opinion." The difficulty lies in telling the difference between answers which offer an

opinion or state information. For example: "How do you feel about capital punishment?" (opinion); "Do you like my new dress?" (opinion); and "What do you think about trade relations between the U.S. and Japan?" (opinion). Generally, these types of questions are similar to preference questions, but in the case of asking for an opinion, a positive, neutral, or negative response is demanded. Often, the correct response begins with "I think," "It seems to me," or "In my opinion." Again, answers providing detailed information without supporting an obvious opinion may be disregarded. (Forster et al., 1997, p. 28)

Apart from recognizing the types of questions being asked, one of the most difficult aspects of Part II of the TOEIC are the answers themselves. The TOEIC makes frequent and varied use of incomplete sentences and idiomatic and colloquial phrases. If the content of the answers themselves do not provide the answer, there are two methods of recognizing the correct response. First, you must pay close attention to seemingly incomplete responses. It is natural to want to disregard an answer which is not grammatically correct; however, in spoken English, shortcuts in usage have led to sentences that are often abbreviated or shortened. Consider the possible responses to the following question: "How long has it been since you've seen your parents?" "When we went to the park Saturday," "This morning in the supermarket," and "Not for weeks" are all acceptable answers in spoken English, even though they are not grammatically correct. If the grammatically correct sentences do not answer the question, then the remaining response, regardless of grammar, is the correct answer; in other words, you must frequently rely on the process of elimination.

In the second approach, you must think carefully about the use of idiomatic and colloquial expressions in the possible responses. Particularly in the case of a question requiring a "yes/no" response, often the correct answer will not simply be "yes" or "no"; instead, you must recognize words or short phrases that mean "yes" or "no" in common, everyday situations. For example, possible responses to the question, "Are you going to Mary's party?" may be: "I wouldn't miss it," "Sure," or "You bet!," all of which are answers that mean "yes." As in the preceding example, the process of

elimination must be used in responses where you do not clearly understand the meaning, as in the case of "You bet!" (Forster et al., 1997, p. 30)

When the revised TOEFL was released in 1994, the Listening Comprehension Section was changed. In its new format, Part A of the TOEFL now has enough in common with Part III of the TOEIC that they can be taught together. The notable differences between the two tests are: 1) The TOEIC allows only 10 seconds between questions whereas the TOEFL allows 12 seconds, and 2) The content of the two tests varies in that the TOEIC has a tendency to concentrate on travel and business-related situations whereas the TOEFL seems to place more emphasis on academic and everyday situations. As stated earlier, while the TOEIC and the TOEFL are different, studying for both tests will dramatically increase your English proficiency. It is also quite possible that the TOEFL test-takers of today will become the TOEIC test-takers of tomorrow.

Both Part III of the TOEIC and Part A of the TOEFL test the ability to understand and interpret spoken English well enough to recognize both general and specific information in short conversations. Neither overly specialized nor purely academic language is used; understanding the gist, or general idea, of the conversation is usually sufficient to select the correct answer. (Forster et al., 1997, p. 33)

In these sections of the tests, one has either 10 seconds or 12 seconds to respond. It is vital, from the very beginning, that you read ahead so that you have perused the answers to the next problem before the short conversation takes place and the question is asked; in this way, as the conversation is taking place, the answers that have already been read will give clues as to what one should be listening for. You must learn to budget your time so that you are always reading ahead in the test. You will find that reading the answers before hearing the conversation and the question makes answering the question quick and easy, and enables you to develop a rhythm wherein you can easily stay ahead for the entire section of the test.

In the TOEFL, there is a pattern in which the most important, or pertinent, information is supplied by the second speaker. You do not have to understand the

entire conversation to guess the answer. Instead, you should concentrate on several key words, particularly nouns and verbs spoken by the second speaker, and listen carefully for the emphasis the speaker places on a particular word or phrase.

You should pay particular attention to the way words are stressed. A rise or a fall in the tone of voice of the second speaker often suggests that the speaker is using irony or sarcasm, in which case the opposite meaning of the words spoken is the correct answer. These types of short conversations usually inquire about the possibility of something happening or the outcome of an event. Irony or sarcasm are sometimes most easily recognized by the abrupt change in tone of voice or the vast difference in tone of voice between the two speakers.

You must also be wary of answers that contain either a few words, or similar sounding words, from those used in the conversation; such answers are intended to be misleading and are usually wrong. If three of the four responses contain key words heard in the conversation, the fourth response (which rewords the information) is almost always the correct answer; however, if only one of the answers contains two or more of the key words, it is almost always the correct answer.
(Forster et al., 1997, p. 34)

The reason it is to your advantage to read ahead in both the TOEIC and the TOEFL is that the answers and the questions provide clues as to what the conversation will be about and what information you should listen for. Therefore, you should practice using the answers and the questions to define the context of the conversation. Sometimes you must make a choice based on inference, or the sum of the clues presented, for the answer may not be obvious.

Before the conversation begins in Part III of the TOEIC, you should read the question and the four possible answers and look for clues suggesting what the conversation will be about and what information you should listen for. Before the conversation begins in Part A of the TOEFL, you should read the four possible answers. This is slightly more difficult in the TOEFL than in the TOEIC for two reasons: first, in the TOEFL, you are not provided with the written question and

second, the possible answers are generally longer than those found in the TOEIC. However, the possible answers always provide a clue as to both what the conversation will be about and what question will be asked. (Forster et al., 1997, p. 35)

In both the TOEIC and the TOEFL, you must be able to recognize questions that ask for general information. General information questions include those that ask about the plans or intentions of one of the speakers. For example: "What does he intend to do?" "What is the man/woman probably going to do?" "Where did they decide to go?" and "What does she plan to do?" Answers to these types of questions must present a general plan of action. Off-topic answers are easy to recognize because the usually offer too many details.

General information questions often pertain to the work (occupation) of one of the speakers. In neither the TOEIC nor the TOEFL are the occupations of the speakers ever stated directly. You must listen to the clues provided in the conversation and make the best guess. Typical clues suggesting a person's occupation include: language, actions, procedures or processes, tools, and objects which are job-specific. For example, if a conversation includes the words "thermometer" and "stethoscope," you can assume that one of the speakers is in the medical profession. Typical questions about a speaker's occupation include: "What's the woman's job?" "What's the man's occupation?" "What kind of work does he do?" "What does this woman do for a living?" and "What is the man's profession?" The correct answer to these types of questions will usually end in a suffix indicating a person's profession. Common suffixes include: *-ect* (architect), *-or* (instructor), *-er* (reporter), *-ist* (machinist), *-cer* (officer), *-ary* (secretary), *-ian* (librarian), *-ent* (president), and *-ant* (attendant). Generally, answers not pertaining to a recognizable profession may be eliminated.

General information questions also concern the relationship between speakers. Questions that require you to define the relationship between two people based upon what is heard in a short conversation usually demand the use of inference. Although more prevalent in the TOEIC, these types of questions appear in both tests and are generally of two types: questions about business and familial/personal relationships.

Common questions are: "What is the relationship between the speakers?" or "What is the relationship between the man and the woman?" Typical answers indicating a business relationship include: "Colleagues," "Teacher and student," "Employer and employee," "Lawyer and client," and "Waiter and customer." Typical answers indicating familial/personal relationships include: "Boyfriend and girlfriend," "Friend," "Aunt," "Brother-in-law," and "Nephew." (Forster et al., 1997, p. 38)

In addition, general information questions include those that ask where a conversation takes place. For example: "Where is this conversation taking place?" "Where does this conversation likely occur?" "Where is the speaker?" "Where are they?" and "Where have they been?" If the answer is not stated explicitly, either the occupation of one of the speakers or the content of the conversation will suggest the correct location. The majority of questions asking about location begin with the word, "where," and generally the correct response will be a combination of a preposition of location followed by a location. Key prepositions of location include: "at," "in," and "on," but a more complete list can be found in Table 7 below.

Table 7: Prepositions of Location

above	beneath	far from	near to	to the left of
across	beside	next to	on	to the right of
around	between	in back of	on top of	under
at	by	in front of	outside	underneath
below	close to	inside	over	

(Forster et al., 1997, p. 39)

Finally, general information questions often concern the subject of the conversation. For example: "What is the topic of the conversation?" "What were they talking about?" "What is this conversation about?" "What does he/she say about _____?" and "What are the speakers discussing?" These answers usually require you to summarize the topic or infer the subject of the conversation based upon the content (Forster et al., 1997, p. 40)

In contrast to general information questions, both the TOEIC and the TOEFL require you to recognize questions that ask for specific information. Specific information questions often ask about time and almost always begin with "when," or

"how" and sometimes "what" used with a time reference (time, day, month, year, etc.). Theses types of questions may demand that you determine the correct time to answer the question because the exact time may not be stated in the conversation. There are three types of these questions: 1) Questions that ask for the time something happened or will happen. For example, "What time does your flight leave?" or "When is the meeting?"; 2) Questions that ask how often, or the frequency something is done. For example, "How often do you play golf?" or "How many vacation days do you get each year?"; and 3) Questions that ask the length of time, or duration of something. For example: "How long will the repairs take?" or "How many days will the computer be down?"

It should be noted that although these answers require a specific time or duration, for example, the time of day, the day of the week, a date, or a season, the answer can also be an adverbial clause referring to a specific time. For instance, an acceptable answer to the question, "When does the man want lunch?" may be, "As soon as the meeting is over." Examples of adverbial clauses include expressions such as the following: "When you get here," "As often as you want," "Whenever you feel like it," and "As soon as I'm finished." (Forster et al., 1997, p. 43)

Specific information questions also include those about what someone wants or what someone means. These questions may be direct or require inference, but in either case, the question will begin with the word "what." For example: "What does she mean?" "What do they want to do?" and "What had the woman assumed about _____?" Answers which are general in nature or do not contain specific information may be eliminated.

Specific information questions sometimes ask for the motivation or reason for doing something. These types of questions almost always begin with "Why...?" but may begin with "What is the reason....?" For example: "Why did Mr. Jordan get a promotion?" or "What is the reason the man gives for being late to work?" Answers to these types of questions will be explicit, or stated directly.

Another type of specific information question asks about a suggestion made by a person or advice given on how to solve a problem. For example: "What does the man suggest she should do?" "What might solve the problem?" and "What is suggested?" Answers unrelated to suggestions or advice, regardless of key words used in possible answers, may be eliminated. Usually, the second speaker's response contains the correct answer.

Finally, specific information questions often demand an exact spelling, a number derived from the conversation, or a specific location. For example: "How does the woman spell her last name?" "How many sets did the woman say she lost in her tennis match?" or "Which country has the highest crime rate?" These types of questions require simply that you listen closely. This type of question is signaled by the possible answers; for example, one may see a variety of spellings of the same name, a variety of numbers, or a list of countries. (Forster et al., 1997, p. 44)

Although the TOEIC test does not include longer conversations, those studying for the TOEIC will certainly benefit from practicing and understanding Part B of the TOEFL test. Part B of the TOEFL is the shortest, but for many the most difficult, section of the test. It contains topics that are generally more academic in nature but include a wide variety of subject matter. Each conversation lasts between 45 and 90 seconds. In Part B of the TOEFL, one will hear two longer conversations. After hearing each conversation, you are asked an average of four questions. As in all of the conversation-related sections of the TOEFL, the goal of the test is to determine how well you can function in academic situations and a variety of everyday activities in North America.

Each conversation is followed by three to five questions, most of which begin with the words: "what," "where," "when," "why," "which," "how" and sometimes "according to." Part B of the TOEFL requires that you are able to distinguish between a general idea and a specific, supporting detail, recognize and understand American idioms and patterns of expressions, and demonstrate a general understanding of contractions and negative contractions. When answering questions in this section, you

need to remember the following two points: 1) In Part B of the TOEFL, the narrator (3rd Voice) will announce that "Questions ____ to ____ are based on the following conversation." A short (1-2 second) pause precedes each conversation. When the conversation concludes, the narrator will ask three to five questions, each separated by a 12-second pause to allow one to answer; and 2) Beginning with the time allotted to read the directions for this section of the test, it is vital that you read the possible answers. The questions asked always follow the order in which the information is presented. In addition, reading the possible answers often provides an understanding of the content of the conversation. Knowing the probable information on which you will be questioned gives you a great advantage. (Forster et al., 1997, p. 52)

In this part of the TOEFL, it is imperative that you learn to not confuse the general idea of a conversation with the details supporting it. A general idea usually consists of a summary of the subject, conclusion reached, or advice given in a conversation. On the other hand, specific details are the facts or particulars that support the general idea. It is not necessary to remember specific details for questions about the general idea; in fact, the wrong answers frequently are about the detailed information, not the general idea. For example, if you heard in part of a conversation:

Man:	Have Bill and Mary finally chosen a color for the new baby's room?
Woman:	No, Mary said that last weekend they tried pink, blue, light green and tangerine and still couldn't make up their minds.
Man:	I don't see what's so difficult about choosing a color to paint the room.
Woman:	Well, it is their first child, and they want everything to be perfect.

it would be easy to confuse the details with the general idea. The general idea of this passage is that a couple can't decide on a color to paint their new baby's room; the specific details, which confuse the issue, are the variety of colors discussed. Therefore, one shouldn't let descriptive adjectives or lists of nouns sidetrack them from the general idea. (Forster et al., 1997, p. 53)

English, perhaps more so than other languages, makes frequent use of idioms (including phrasal verbs) and patterned expressions, and both the TOEIC and the TOEFL test your ability to recognize and understand the use of both. Idioms and phrasal verbs are set-expressions whose meanings cannot be understood by the individual meanings of the words contained within them. The word order in both idioms and phrasal verbs cannot be rearranged or have other words substituted for them: in this way, they are set and unvarying, and only one combination of words has a specific meaning. Consider the three idioms in the following sentences: "He visits his children every other Saturday"; "Sooner or later, Richard will have to move"; and "She's been late to school quite a few times."

In the first example, "every other" would seem to suggest any Saturday except this Saturday, but it really means alternate Saturdays. In the second example, "sooner or later" would seem to suggest a choice of times to move, but it really means eventually or inevitably. In the third example, "quite a few" seems to suggest a very small number of times, but actually it means a lot or a large number of times.

Next, consider the phrasal verbs in the following sentences: "I'll be broke if I buy all the books for this class"; "Bob couldn't figure out the math problem"; and "Shoko fell behind the others." In the first example, "be broke" seems to suggest that something is out of order or is damaged, but it really means to not have any money. In the second example, "figure out" seems to suggest removing the numbers from the problem, but it really means he couldn't solve, understand, or determine the answer to the problem. In the third example, "fell behind" seems to suggest that she has collapsed and the others have not noticed, as if they were going somewhere, but it really means that she is not maintaining the same pace as the others--and it may refer to either their speed of walking, the pace of their work, or their progress.

The literal meaning of an idiom or a phrasal verb is rarely the intended meaning; consequently, guessing becomes difficult if not impossible to do; therefore, idioms and phrasal verbs must be memorized. Patterned expressions, on the other hand, are more flexible in nature simply because they reflect the way people speak in everyday

conversation, which leads to variations of the same expression. A common example of a patterned-expression are the variations on the theme of saying "Good-bye": "Good-bye," "Bye," "I'll see you later," "See you later," "Later," "Talk to you later," "Catch you later" and "I'll be seeing you." While there are a wide variety of differences among these expressions, the purpose and meaning are identical. More so than in the case of idioms and phrasal verbs, the meanings of patterned expressions are more likely to be understood in terms of the context of the conversation; that is to say, although the construction may be misleading, or even elliptical, the intention of the words conveyed in the context often provides meaning. Perhaps the best way to make a guess about the meaning of a patterned expression is by having a grasp of the general meaning of the conversation. Often the interaction of the speakers, their tone of voice, and the context in which a patterned-expression is used, provides enough information for you to make an educated guess. (Forster et al., 1997, p. 56)

Both the TOEIC and the TOEFL make ample use of contractions, particularly in the Listening Comprehension sections of the tests; therefore, it is important that you have a good understanding of contractions. There are two kinds of contractions: those that join words and those that negate verbs. First, the most common type of contraction adds a verb or modal to a noun to make one shortened form that is more convenient to use in a conversation. The verb being shortened and added to the main word most commonly is a form of the verbs "to be," or "to have," or the modal verbs "will" or "would." Common contractions of this kind include: "I'm" = "I am," "he/she's" = "he/she is" or "he/she was" or "he/she has," "it's" = "it is" or "it was" or "it has," "they're" = "they are" or "they were," "we're" = "we are" or "we were," "I've" = "I have," "I'd" = "I had" or "I would," "he/she'd" = "he/she had" or "he/she would," "they'd" = "they had" or "they would," "we'd" = "we had" or "we would," "I'll" = "I will," "he/she'll" = "he/she will," "Bob'll" = "Bob will," and "Mary'd" = "Mary had" or "Mary would." (Forster et al., 1997, p. 61)

What makes contractions confusing is that the meaning is dictated by the context in which it is used. This is particularly troubling in the case of "'s" which may mean

"is," "was," or "has," and "'d," which may mean "had" or "would." The tense or meaning of the contraction in the case of "'s" and "'d" is usually determined by contextual clues contained in the sentence or the preceding sentence. For example, in the sentence: "If you'd asked him last year, he'd have said he's busy," the key words "asked," "last year," and "said," all indicate that this sentence employs the past tense; consequently, without contractions, the sentence would read: "If you had asked him last year, he would have said he was busy."

Just as one can check their work in addition by working the problem backwards using subtraction, one can verify the meaning intended by contractions simply by putting the words back in their original form. If the sentence does not make sense, particularly in terms of time, then one has chosen the wrong meaning for the second half of the contraction. Questions that depend upon understanding the contractions used often require an answer that is simply a translation, or a restatement, of the sentence in which the contraction occurs.

An unusual contraction commonly used in everyday conversation is one that joins a verb to a modal verb. For example: "could've" = "could have," "would've" = "would have," and "should've" = "should have." Although easier to recognize, one must listen carefully for contractions that negate verbs or modals in the conversations on both the TOEIC and the TOEFL. These kinds of contractions are formed by adding "n't," which replaces the word "not," to a verb or modal. Common examples include: "hasn't" = "has not," "haven't" = "have not," "don't" = "do not," "didn't" = "did not," "couldn't" = "could not," "wouldn't" = "would not," "can't" = "can not," "won't" = "will not," and "shouldn't" = "should not. " (Forster et al., 1997, p. 62)

There are two main differences between Part IV of the TOEIC and Section 1, Part C of the TOEFL. The first difference is that in the TOEIC, you are provided with both the questions and the possible answers for the short talk to follow; in the TOEFL, you are only provided with the possible answers. The second difference is in subject matter: the subjects of the TOEIC short talks tend to cover what may be loosely categorized as business-related subjects while the TOEFL tends to lean more towards

academic subjects. The TOEIC short talks generally range from 35 to 150 words, whereas the TOEFL ranges from approximately 75 to 450 words.

Both Part IV of the TOEIC and Part C of the TOEFL test your ability to understand extended spoken material in English. The short talks in Part IV of the TOEIC consist mainly of commercial advertisements, public service advertisements and announcements, news stories, and the language used in business settings. The content of the short talks in the TOEFL include: announcements, lectures, explanations, informative talks, or news summaries on a variety of subjects. Many of these short talks are presented as representations of the language found in a university lecture hall and test your ability to understand it.

When answering the questions in these sections, one should note the following four points: 1) The questions about the short talks in Part IV of the TOEIC and Part C of the TOEFL, with the exception of what is usually the first question that may be about a general idea or summary of the information presented, are asked in the order the information is presented in the short talk. In the case of the TOEIC, since both the question and the possible answers are provided, you can make a reasonable estimate of the content of the short talk and what information to listen for. Similarly, although the TOEFL test book doesn't include the questions, the possible answers provided give clues as to the information presented and the order in which it will occur. Therefore, it is vital that you use the time provided for test instructions and section introduction to read ahead; by any means possible, you should stay ahead in the reading; 3) For the TOEIC, you should read the questions and possible answers for the short talk to come during the time provided to read the directions. The last thing heard before the short talk begins is the third voice saying: "Questions ____ and ____ are based on the following talk," or "Questions ____ through ____ are based on the following talk." Depending upon whether the third voice uses the word "and," meaning there will be two questions, or "through," meaning there will three to four questions, you will know how many questions will be asked and where to stop while reading ahead. In the TOEFL, the same information as in the TOEIC is provided, except it always uses the

word "through," and there are always three to five questions; and 4) Both the TOEIC and the TOEFL provide a general idea of the subject of the short talk. For example, you might hear: "Questions 39 through 42 are based on the following lecture about the sport of surfing." Sometimes, but not often, this provides you with the opportunity to recognize and eliminate off-topic answers. (Forster et al., 1997, p. 68)

While reading ahead in both the TOEIC and the TOEFL, it is important to remember two things: first, the questions asked will follow the order in which the information is presented in the short talk and second, the first question you must answer is almost always about the subject or main idea of the short talk. By reading the questions and possible answers in the TOEIC test book, and by reading the possible answers in the TOEFL test book and listening to the announcement regarding the subject of the short talk, you are provided with an idea of the organization of the short talks as well as the questions that will be asked. Common questions about the subject/topic of a short talk include: "What is the main idea/topic of this talk?" "What is the purpose of this talk?" "What problem has led to ...?" "What best describes ...?" "What does the speaker imply about ...?" and "Why did ... happen?"

If the short talk offers an explanation, a procedure, the history of something, how something operates, or a general description, the purpose of the short talk is usually obvious; the difficulty lies in choosing the best general summary. Again, it is important to not confuse the supporting details with the general idea. Sometimes you must use inference to recognize the main idea or topic of the short talk because occasionally the short talk does not include an introduction and/or conclusion. In short, it is as if only a portion of a lecture or announcement, etc. is being heard and you must supply the missing information. (Forster et al., 1997, p. 69)

More so in the short talks than in any other part of the listening comprehension sections of the TOEIC and the TOEFL, you must listen for and remember pertinent information provided by the speaker. Pertinent information generally consists of either facts about, or conditions placed upon, the information presented. Both tests require you to recall important facts about the short talk. These facts may refer to proper

nouns, specific actions, times or dates, numbers, or location. Questions about facts are usually direct in nature, and the possible answers will state specific information. Examples of this type of question usually begin with the words: "who," "what," "which," "when," "where," and "how." For example: "Who is ...?" "At what time ...?" "What is the number of ...?" "What is causing ...?" "According to the speaker, what is ...?" "How many ...?" "How far ...?" "How long ...?" "How much ...?" "Where did ...?" "When did ...?" and "Which of the following ...?" The answers to these types of questions will be specific information; vague or general answers may usually be eliminated. In the case of the TOEIC, reading the questions in advance tells you exactly what you should be listening for; in the case of the TOEFL, the possible answers which list specific information provide clues about what you should be listening for.

The questions in these sections of the tests often require that you demonstrate an understanding of what will happen under certain expressed conditions; in other words, how one thing will affect something else. These types of questions are easily recognized because they are very direct. Examples of this type of question include: "Under what circumstances ...?" "How does ...affect ...?" "What was the reason for ...?" and "What will happen if ... happens?" Answers to these types of questions demonstrate a change that is the result of the condition placed upon the original circumstance or situation.

Since the TOEFL does not provide the written question, the information contained in the possible answers, although not pointing directly to the subject matter, seems to answer a question about why something happened, under what conditions something happened, or what caused something to happen. Unlike a TOEIC problem, in which the question is also provided, any clues about what to listen for in the TOEFL are helpful. (Forster et al., 1997, p. 74)

Although appearing on both tests, the TOEIC often requires you to make a prediction about what will happen; on the other hand, the TOEFL frequently requires you to choose something that does not occur in the short talk. However, both types of

questions appear on the TOEIC and the TOEFL. A TOEIC question that asks you to make a prediction essentially is asking you to make a best guess about what will happen based upon the information presented. Often, these types of questions are qualified with words such as "probably" or "if," or phrases such as: "Based on the information" or "What would happen if...." Other examples include: "What is ... going to talk about?" "What should you do if ...?" "What is probably the reason for ...?" "Where is ... probably located?" "What can we conclude about ...?" and "Where did this talk probably take place?" The answers to these types of questions require that you use the information that has been provided and to make a guess about what will happen at a later date; often the answers to these questions require the listener to provide the effect portion of a cause-effect relationship. Furthermore, these types of questions demand that you demonstrate a thorough understanding of the subject under discussion, which of course, is always necessary before you can make a prediction.

In the course of a short talk on the TOEFL test, you are often provided with a list of details that support or expand upon the main idea. This list may include reasons, work, places, times, etc. and serves to demonstrate the general idea of the subject. Frequently, such a list is provided and you are asked to choose which of the four possible answers was not included in the short talk. For example: "Which of the following was NOT mentioned as a reason for ...?" "What is one thing (someone) will NOT need/take/buy/etc. ...?" "Which of the following places was NOT ...?" and "Which ... does the ... NOT mention?"

With the exception of answers detailing possible reasons, the possible answers provide three of the four things one must listen for; the fourth thing, the one not mentioned in the short talk, is the correct answer. In the case of answers detailing possible reasons, the correct answer, that is the reason NOT listed, often contains too much information and is off-topic. (Forster et al., 1997, p. 80)

Specific Test-taking Strategies: Structure, Written Expression & Reading Comprehension

As in the Listening Comprehension sections of the TOEIC and the TOEIC, you should understand the directions to each section of the test and use the time allotted for

reading the directions to begin reading the questions in the test booklet. You should simply read ahead, making note of the immediate answers that come to mind. In addition, you must watch the time: most people do not complete the Reading Comprehension Section of either test because they do not manage their time efficiently. You are allowed approximately 45 seconds per question on the TOEIC and 66 seconds per question on the TOEFL. Therefore, you should not spend too much time on any one question or reading because it will decrease the time left for the remaining questions. Furthermore, you should use the last minute of the allotted time to fill in the blanks remaining on the answer sheet with the letter you have chosen as the "guess" response. Again, there is no penalty for guessing, so there is no excuse for leaving blanks on the answer sheet. Finally, both the TOEIC and the TOEFL require a college-level English vocabulary; however, if you don't know the definition of a word used in a sentence, you should try to use the other words in the sentence to help determine what the word means. Recognizing the context in which a word is used may provide a clue to its meaning. It is important to remember that you do not have to understand every word in a sentence to understand its meaning. (Forster et al., 1997, p. 90)

Both Part V of the TOEIC and Section 2, Part A of the TOEFL test the following grammatical structures in written English: word form (nouns, verbs, adjectives, pronouns and adverbs), roots, prefixes and suffixes, synonyms, different parts of speech formed from the same basic word, parallel structure, subordinate clauses, conjunctions, subject/verb agreement, active/passive voice, gerunds and infinitives, prepositions and prepositional phrases, articles, verb tense, and complete versus partial clauses.

Part V of the TOEIC and Section 2, Part A of the TOEFL test your knowledge of English vocabulary and grammar in its written form at the word and phrase level. Generally speaking, in the TOEIC you must either provide the missing word or phrase that correctly fills in the blank within the sentence; the TOEFL, on the other hand, usually requires you to choose the phrase that best begins or completes the sentence provided; however, a variety of both formats can be found in both tests. Again,

studying both types of questions can only improve your overall knowledge of English and therefore improve your test scores.

When answering the questions in this section, you should remember the following two points: 1) Possible answers in these sections of both the TOEIC and the TOEFL rarely contain more than two clauses. The general punctuation and capitalization in the possible answers are always correct, so you should not waste time looking for mistakes in these areas; and 2) Of the possible answers in both the TOEIC and the TOEFL, there is usually only one answer that is grammatically correct; as you read the answers, you should immediately eliminate those answers that contain any grammatical error and pay particular attention to word order, tense, and part of speech.

A surprising number of words in the English language are composed of groups of small segments that contribute to an overall meaning. An understanding of these segments, known as roots, prefixes and suffixes, not only improves the range of your vocabulary, but also provides clues to the meaning of words you does not recognize. A basic grasp of roots, prefixes and suffixes, combined with the context in which the word in question is used, greatly increases your chances of guessing correctly.

Perhaps the most important thing to remember when trying to determine the meaning of a word from its root, prefix or suffix, or combination thereof, is that the best you can hope for is a general idea of the meaning, not an exact definition. This is because no root, prefix, or suffix has only one specific meaning; rather, each suggests a general meaning, or an effect on the general meaning, as it occurs in formal written English. (Forster et al., 1997, p. 92)

Roots are the essential meaning segment of a word and are the basis upon which variations occur. Recognizing roots in their most basic form is often difficult for two reasons. In their most basic form, roots are often unrecognizable because in their root form they are not used any longer as independent words. Furthermore, a large proportion of roots take their basic meaning from Greek and Latin, languages which don't contribute as much to English today as they have in the past. Consequently, many roots must be memorized. A sample of roots include: "equi," which means

"roughly," "approximately," or "equal." Thus, examples of words using the root "equi" include: "equate," which means to make or treat as equal; "equitable," which suggests to treat equally or fairly; and "equilibrium," which suggests equality between opposing forces.

Sometimes roots are hard to identify and difficult to understand; this is because the English language has evolved over time and the meanings of words have changed to reflect how people have come to use them. As strange as it sounds, sometimes when guessing the meaning of a word, if all else fails, you should try using the opposite of your first guess. For example, if you knew that the root "cede" meant roughly "to go" or "to continue," and that the prefix "inter-" meant roughly "between" or "in the middle of," it is entirely logical that the meaning of the word "intercede" would be: "to go between." However, in the word "perfidious," you would think from the prefix, root, and suffix that it would mean "throughout" or "completely (per-)" combined with "faith (fid)" combined with "full of (-ious)," or "full of faith"; actually, "perfidious" means exactly the opposite, or "completely lacking in faith." (Forster et al., 1997, p. 93)

Prefixes are segments which are added to the beginning of a word to modify the meaning of the root (the basic or central meaning). A few examples of how prefixes change the meaning of the root include: "dis-," "il-," "im-," "in-," "ir-," and "un-," which mean "not," "lack of," or "the opposite of." For example, "disbelieve" suggests the lack of belief, or not knowing; "illegitimate" suggests the opposite of legitimate, or not legal; "impossible" suggests not possible, or the opposite of possible; "incomplete" suggests not complete; "irresponsible" suggests not responsible, or the lack of responsibility; "nonproductive" suggests not productive, or the lack of productivity; and "unnatural" suggests not natural, or the opposite of natural.

You should always try to identify the root before trying to determine a word's meaning via its prefix. Unfortunately, not every word beginning with a prefix actually contains a prefix; similar spellings are a matter of coincidence and you must guard against mistakes by verifying that there is a root to be effected. In order to do this, you should remove the prefix and see if the remaining letters form a recognizable root. If

you can recognize the root, you are dealing with a prefix. If the root doesn't make sense, there is a good chance there is no prefix. For example, "insane" has the word "sane" as its root; the prefix "in-" changes the root's meaning to "not sane." But if you removes the "in-" from the word "inane," the letters "ane" have no meaning; consequently, "in-" is not, in this case, a prefix, but merely a coincidence of spelling. (Forster et al., 1997, p. 94)

Suffixes are word segments that add meaning to the root or prefix-root combination. It is rare for a suffix to change the meaning of a root. Suffixes perform two roles in that they describe the tense or function of a word and can help identify a word's part of speech (noun, verb, adjective, or adverb). For example, the suffixes "-ect," "-er," "-or," "-ist," and "-ian," mean a person or thing that "does something" and form nouns. Examples include: "architect," which means a person who designs architecture; "performer," which means a person who performs, "excavator," which means a person who excavates; "podiatrist," which means a person who practices podiatry; and "historian," which means a person who studies history.

The suffixes "-ade," "-ate," "-en" and "-ize" form verbs which mean an action or a process of doing something. For example: "persuade" means the act of convincing; "incinerate" means the act of burning; "widen" means the act of increasing width; and "economize" means the process of saving money. On the other hand, the suffixes "-ful," "-ous," "-able," and "-ible" form adjectives which mean "full of," "able to," "fit for," or "can." For example: "hateful" means full of hate; "pious" means full of piety; "recognizable" means being able to recognize something; and "edible" means fit for eating or consumption. Finally, the suffixes "-ly" and "-wise" form adverbs that mean "like," "the way," or "similar to being." For example: "predictability" suggests the way something is predictable, and "workwise" suggests the way something is related to work. (Forster et al., 1997, p. 95)

Both the TOEIC and the TOEFL often include word form errors in the possible answers. By learning to recognize these types of errors, you will quickly be able to eliminate incorrect answers; regardless of content, the correct answer will not have any

word form errors. This means that in a worst case scenario, in which comprehension eludes you, eliminating grammatically incorrect answers greatly improves your chances of guessing correctly. Word form errors on both the TOEIC and the TOEFL include nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, pronouns, and prepositional phrases which act as adjectives and adverbs.

Nouns must be consistent with the context of the sentence. For example: "The American people depend on the president for his experience, knowledge, and _____ (lead, leading, leadership, or leader)." Verbs must agree in both number and tense. For example: "Over the last century, the level of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere _____ (increases every year, every year increasing, have increase dramatically, or has increased dramatically)." Adjectives answer the question, "What kind?" and either describe or limit a noun. For example: "Mr. Smith asked his secretary to arrange the files in _____ order (alphabet, alphabetize, alphabetically, or alphabetical)." Adverbs are used mainly to modify verbs, adjectives, or other adverbs. The TOEIC and the TOEFL make frequent use of questions requiring one to differentiate between adverbs and adjectives. For example: "Rebecca's score on the examination was the highest in the class; _____ (serious, she studied regularly for two weeks to prepare for the exam; she studied everyday for two weeks to prepare for the exam; she studied diligent everyday for two weeks; or She studied to prepare regular)." Pronouns must agree with the noun they refer to, its antecedent, in number, and gender. For example: "Students must quickly learn to take care of _____ if they are to succeed in the university (themselves, their, them, or himself)." In addition, you must be able to differentiate between prepositional phrases that act as adjectives; for example: "Interest is the key to life," and prepositional phrases that act as adverbs: "By their fruits you shall know them." (Forster et al., 1997, p. 99)

Both the TOEIC and the TOEFL frequently test prepositions. What makes prepositions difficult to learn is that almost every preposition rule has exceptions. Generally speaking, a preposition is a word placed before a noun or pronoun to create a phrase that modifies another word in a sentence; together, this preposition and noun or

pronoun combine to make a prepositional phrase. A prepositional phrase almost always acts as either an adjective or as an adverb. Therefore, if you can determine what kind of function the prepositional phrase should play in the sentence, answers which do not perform that function may be eliminated.

When a prepositional phrase acts as an adjective, it usually answers the adjective questions: "Which kind of?" or "Which one?" More importantly, a prepositional phrase acting as an adjective almost always appears right after the word it modifies and cannot be relocated in the sentence. For example, "Interest is the key to life." If we ask, "Which kind of key?" we get the understandable answer, "The key to life," so we know the prepositional phrase is acting as an adjective in this case. If the answer had not been understandable, the prepositional phrase would have been acting as an adverb.

When a prepositional phrase acts as an adverb, it usually answers one of the adverb questions: "How?" "Under what conditions?" "To what degree?" "When?" "Where?" or "Why?" Adverbial prepositional phrases may occur anywhere in a sentence and may, in fact, be movable. For example, "By their fruits you shall know them." If we ask the question, "How shall you know them?", we get the understandable answer, "By their fruits," so in this case, we know the prepositional phrase is acting as an adverb. Note that this sentence could just as easily been, "You shall know them by their fruit." It is important to remember that if you cannot move the prepositional phrase, it is acting as an adjective; if you can move it within a sentence, it is acting as an adverb. See Table 8 for some of the most common prepositions.

Table 8: Common Prepositions Found in the TOEIC & TOEFL

about	beside	from	outside	toward
above	besides	in	over	under
across	between	inside	past	underneath
after	beyond	into	plus	unlike
against	but	like	regarding	until
along	by	near	respecting	unto
among	concerning	next	round	up
around	considering	of	since	upon
as	despite	off	than	without
at	down	on	through	without
before	during	onto	throughout	
behind	except	opposite	till	
below	for	out	to	

(Forster et al., 1997, p. 103)

Rather than memorizing rules for individual prepositions, most of which are riddled with exceptions, it may be equally effective to group them into categories in which they are most commonly used. Very generally, for there are many exceptions, prepositional phrases act as adjectives or adverbs in the following categories: position in space, time, cause, method, and possession.

Many prepositions can be understood if they are considered spatially, that is, as showing a relationship between two things in space. Prepositions in this category commonly indicate a position in, or movement through, space; for example: "above," "at," "over," "on," "to," "from," "out," "in," "through," "into," "out of," "by," "below," and "under," or origin; for example: "from," "out of," "of," "by," and "in." The prepositional phrases in this category usually act as adverbs as they modify verbs, usually answering "Where?" or "How?" questions. For example: "The plane flew *over* the building"; "Phil lives *in* the apartment *above* John"; "He was transferred *from* data processing *to* advertising"; and "Although he is an American citizen, he is *of* German ancestry."

Prepositions involving time include: "during," "since," "for," "from...to," "by," "in," "at," and "on." These types of prepositional phrases usually act as adverbs. For example: "*During* the night, it snowed 10 centimeters"; "I have known him *since* I was a child"; "He was sent to prison *for* 11 years"; and "She works *from* 9:00 *to* 5:00, Monday through Friday." Prepositions involving cause include: "due to," "of," and "until." Prepositions involving condition include: "since," "out of," and "in." Those that involve intention include: "by," "on," and "with." These types of prepositional phrases usually act as adverbs. For example: "The plane couldn't land *due to* heavy fog"; "His car was *in* poor repair"; and "He left his textbook home *on* purpose."

Prepositions that involve method are usually adverbs and include: "by" and "with." Those involving mode of transportation include: "by," "in," and "on." Still others involve authorship and include "by." For example: "She ate *with* a spoon"; "They came to America *by* ship"; and "The Killers was written *by* Ernest Hemingway."

Prepositions that involve possession are usually adjectives because they describe who or what something belongs to or the kind of quality a person possesses and include: "of," "to," and "with." For example: "Barbara is a dancer *of* great talent"; He was faithful *to* his wife"; and "Benjamin Franklin was a man *with* great aspirations."

From the above examples, you can see that prepositions may used in many ways, and their usage often overlaps, which in turn makes learning prepositional rules somewhat pointless. It should be noted that prepositional phrases seem to act more commonly as adverbs than as adjectives. Consequently, when encountering a question on the TOEIC or the TOEFL that requires a prepositional phrase that acts as an adverb, one that acts as an adjective may be eliminated, and vice-versa. Although this strategy is not fool-proof, being able to eliminate a wrong answer or two greatly improves your chances of guessing the correct answer. The best way to learn prepositions is to use them within the context of the generalizations outlined above. We would like to point out, however, that by far the best way to learn prepositions is by reading and considering the way prepositions have been used. (Forster et al., p. 104)

Both Part VI of the TOEIC and Section 2, Part B of the TOEFL, test various grammatical structures on the word and phrase level. These include: adjectives and adverbs, articles, comparative, compound, and superlative adjectives, embedded questions, parallel structures, prepositions, relative pronouns, redundancy, subject-verb agreement, verb form, and word form and order. When answering the questions in this section, it is important to remember the following two points: 1) When initially reading the sentence, it is important to grasp an idea of what the sentence is trying to express. Once you understand the intention of the sentence, you can then try to determine word and phrase level errors. In fact, until you understand what the sentence is trying to say, you cannot identify the grammatical error in it; and 2) The first thing you should always do in these sections of the tests is to identify the subject and the verb of the sentence and to confirm that they are grammatically correct. If you can identify an error in the subject or the verb of the sentence, you need not look further; and since a relatively large percentage of the incorrect answers involve the subject and the verb, this can save you a great deal of time. (Forster et al., 1997, p. 111)

Mistakes in word order are common in both Parts V and VI of the TOEIC and in Section 2, Parts A and B of the TOEFL. These types of mistakes involve intentionally inverting words in a phrase to make ungrammatical constructions. Generally, there are five kinds of word order inversions: subject-verb, verb-object, object-adjective, adjective-adverb, and adverb-noun-verb.

Subject-verb inversion errors reverse the order of the subject and verb in a phrase or clause. This type of error is usually the easiest to recognize because the phrase doesn't quite make sense. For example, consider the sentence: "Mary didn't know how long had he lived there." The inversion of "had he lived" is incorrect because a noun never appears between two verbs that together make a compound verb; placing a noun between two verbs forming a compound verb changes the meaning of the verb.

Verb-object inversion errors place the direct object of a transitive verb before the verb, which is illogical. A transitive verb requires a direct object, which may be a word or word group, that names who or what receives the action of the verb. A sentence containing a transitive verb without an object is incomplete; a sentence with the direct object before the verb doesn't make sense. For example, consider the sentence: "Unsold stock may be back sent after three months." The inversion of "back sent" states the destination before the verb doing the action, which doesn't make sense.

Similarly, the direct object of a transitive verb should appear immediately following the verb. By inverting an adverb and direct object, the "how" or "when" precedes the "what," thereby confusing the sentence. For example: "Renee bought last week a new sports car." In this sentence, "bought" is a transitive verb, so it should be followed immediately by the direct object, "a new sports car," not the adverb "last week," which describes when she purchased the car. Although adverbs often may be moved in a sentence, they are never placed between a transitive verb and its direct object.

Adjective-adverb inversion errors usually try to explain the "how" or "when" of something before it explains the "what": that is to say, the adverb occurs before the adjective it modifies which confuses the sentence. For example, consider the following sentence: "Fred was not enough intelligent to get into Harvard." In this example, by placing the adverb

"enough" before the adjective "intelligent," the sentence tries to explain the "how" before the "what," which makes the sentence nonsensical.

Adverb-noun-verb placement errors occur when an adverb is placed in such a way that it seems to modify a noun instead of the verb it is intended to modify. Consider the sentence: "Hardly he had begun to master Japanese before he had to return to America." "Hardly" in this sentence seems to modify the noun "he" rather than the verb "had," and adverbs can modify just about anything in a sentence but never modify a noun. (Forster et al., 1997, p. 112)

In the error recognition portion of the tests, you should pay particular attention to three types of subject-verb agreement mistakes: verbs conjugated to the wrong nouns, compound subjects joined by "and," "or ," or "nor," and verbs conjugated to nouns that follow the verb, as in the case of expletives. First, you must make the verb agree with the subject, not with word or words that come between the subject and the verb. You must also remember that a prepositional phrase modifies a part of the sentence and is never the subject of a sentence. Second, word groups often appear between the subject and the verb and usually modify the subject, but sometimes it seems as though a noun contained in the word group is the subject of the sentence. If you remove such modifiers, you can more easily identify the noun that is the actual subject of the sentence. For example, consider the following sentence: "A high quality set of golf clubs (cost/costs) about six hundred dollars." It would be easy to confuse "golf clubs" with the subject of the sentence. But "of golf clubs" is a prepositional phrase, which we know must modify some other part of the sentence and cannot be the subject of the sentence. By removing the prepositional phrase, the sentence now reads: "A high quality set (cost/costs) about six hundred dollars." Thus, "set" becomes easily recognized as the subject upon which the conjugation of the verb relies, in this case requiring the verb, "costs."

Compound (or multi-word) subjects are particularly frustrating to conjugate verbs to unless one remembers two simple rules: if a compound subject is joined by "and," it is almost always treated as plural; if the compound subject is joined by "or" or "nor," the verb must agree with the part of the subject closest to the verb. Nouns joined

by "and" before the verb form a group that together make up the compound subject of the sentence, and the verb must agree with the plural form of the group. For example, consider the sentence: "Phil and Robin sometimes jog/jogs together in the park." Together, "Phil and Robin" make the subject (they) of the sentence plural, and so the correct verb form is "jog." This would be an easy rule to remember were it not for two kinds of exceptions.

First, if the parts of a compound subject comprise to a single thing or if they refer to the same noun, the subject should be treated as singular. For example, in the sentence: "Doug's friend and advisor (was/were) not surprised by his decision to leave the country," Doug's "friend and advisor" is the same person, which means the subject of the sentence, even though it lists two nouns, is singular, which in this case requires the use of the verb "was." Second, if a compound subject is preceded by "each" or "every," regardless of how many nouns are listed, the subject is singular. If the compound subject is followed by "each," this exception does not apply because the location of each changes the meaning of the sentence. For example, in the sentence: "Each table and chair (need/needs) to be dusted," "Each" is used to point out individual nouns in the subject, and the verb acts as if it is being conjugated to each one separately, not collectively. This sentence requires the use of the verb "needs." However, when "each" follows a noun in a compound subject, it is used to point out the differences between the nouns but does not change the fact that the two together form a compound subject. Consider the following sentence: "Robert and Rachel each (has/have) different ideas about the new product line"; "Each," in this case, is used to highlight, or draw attention to, their differing ideas, not the fact that together they are the subject of the sentence; therefore, "have" is the correct form of the verb. A compound subject joined by "or" or "nor" means that one or the other, not both, is doing (or not doing) something, and the verb should agree with the part of the subject closest to the verb. In the sentence: "Either a driver's license or a social security card (is/are) required to complete the form," since one or the other is necessary, the verb is

conjugated to the noun closest to the verb, not both nouns collectively, so "is" is the correct verb form.

Ordinarily, verbs follow the subjects of sentences. Sometimes, however, the normal word order is reversed because the writer chose to use an expletive, "there," followed by a form of "to be"; for example: "there is," "there are," "there was" or "there were" at the beginning of a sentence, which makes it easy to become confused. In these kinds of sentences, the subject follows the verb. Consider the following sentence: "There was/were three books on the counter." The subject of this sentence is "three books" and requires the use of the verb "were." In sentences beginning with an expletive, one must look beyond the verb and identify the subject, and then go back to confirm the correct verb form. (Forster et al., 1997, p. 114)

Both the TOEIC and the TOEFL often contain errors in parallel structure. Sometimes a sentence details ideas of essentially equal importance. If these ideas are balanced, they should be written in the same grammatical form, or in a parallel structure. Words need to be balanced with words, phrases with phrases, and clauses with clauses.

Coordinating conjunctions such as "for," "and," "nor," "but," "or," "yet," and "so" are used to join a pair or a list of things. When the things listed are of equal importance and need to be balanced, a parallel grammatical structure should be used. For example, consider the sentence: "If you get caught cheating on an examination, suspension or being expelled from school may result." The coordinating conjunction "or" joins two parallel ideas: what will result if you are caught cheating on an examination. But the ideas are not presented in a balanced, or parallel structure: "suspension" is a noun, and "being expelled" is a gerund phrase. This sentence can be corrected by changing either "suspension" or "getting expelled" to a form that matches the other: "suspension" and "expulsion," or "being suspended" and "being expelled."

In sentences which use "than" or "as" to demonstrate a comparison, the things being compared must be in parallel grammatical structure. For example, consider the sentence: "Most people think it is easier to ride a bicycle than riding a unicycle." "To

ride a bicycle" and "riding a unicycle" are being compared, as is demonstrated by "than," but the two are not constructed in a balanced grammatical form. One or the other must be changed so the things being compared match the other grammatically; that is, the sentence should read either, "Most people think it is easier to ride a bicycle than it is to ride a unicycle" or "Most people think riding a bicycle is easier than riding a unicycle."

Ideas joined by correlative conjunctions must be balanced grammatically. Correlative conjunctions always appear in pairs: "either...or," "neither...nor," "not only...but also," "both...and," and "whether...or." Because correlative conjunctions always operate in pairs, the grammatical structure following each must match in order to be balanced. For example, consider the following sentence: "The planks I ordered were not only too long but also were too wide." Although very similar, "not only too long" does not match with "but also were too wide" because restating the word "were" unbalances the construction. By removing the word "were," the construction becomes parallel: "The planks I ordered were not only too long but also too wide." (Forster et al., 1997, p. 116)

Both the TOEIC and the TOEFL require a sound vocabulary and a relatively sophisticated grasp of English grammar; unfortunately, studying vocabulary and grammar alone can be quite boring and nonproductive. Therefore, the best way to study for the second half of either test is to read English language materials. Newspapers, magazines, short stories and novels are good practice because you are more likely to finish reading what you started. What you read doesn't need to be difficult or of vast literary importance; what is important is that you are interested in it, so it doesn't matter if you read glamour or automobile magazines, historical fiction or detective novels, as long as they are in English.

While reading, whether you are aware of it or not, you will be exposed to and absorb a certain amount of the grammar, styles, and uses of often difficult aspects of the English language: prepositions and articles, for example. With time and

commitment, you will develop an "ear" for the language that will alert you when encountering something that is unusual and possibly incorrect.

When you come across a word you do not understand, you should not simply look it up in the dictionary. Research shows that you probably won't remember the definition of a word from a dictionary: retaining a vocabulary word requires something more. However, if you try to guess the meaning of a word, if you try to reason out what the meaning of a word may be based on the context in which it is used, and any other clues the text provides before looking it up in the dictionary, there is a far better chance of remembering the meaning of that word. The reason for this is simple: if you take the time to actually think about the meaning of a word without using a dictionary, the effort put forth helps you to remember the word. When you do look up a word in the dictionary, you will be interested in seeing if the guess was correct; if it wasn't, you will naturally try to determine why, and this will help you remember. This is also a great way to practice using roots, prefixes and suffixes.

Another thing to remember is that you do not need to understand every word in a sentence to understand its meaning. Research demonstrates that most people do not read every word in a passage. In fact, it is natural to omit words, sometimes many words, because it is possible to guess the meaning of the text without them. Therefore, you should not try to understand every word in a sentence; instead, you should do your best to guess the meaning of a word, and if unable to make a guess, you should skip the question.

Both Part VII of the TOEIC and Section 3 of the TOEFL test reading comprehension. However, Part VII of the TOEIC tests the ability to read and understand a variety of everyday English material, such as: advertisements, announcements, business reports, charts, forms, news articles, and letters. The TOEFL, on the other hand, tests the ability to read and understand readings of an academic nature. For example: the arts, biology, history, and science, etc.

When reading the texts and answering the questions in this section, you should remember the following points: 1) Read the text only one time. Before reading the

passage, you should carefully read the questions and possible answers and make sure you understand what each question demands before reading the passage. This not only provides you with an idea of what is about to read, but it also tells you exactly what you should look for. As you read the passage, you should stop and answer questions as you come across the answers; 2) Questions which require you to choose the "main idea" of, or a "title" for the passage, requires you to consider the passage as a whole. Usually, these types of questions will be the first in the set; otherwise, the questions are asked in the order the information appears in the text. This allows you to skip questions and quickly find your way back to them later, as needed; 3) Most people do not finish the Reading Comprehension Section of the TOEIC and the TOEFL: they run out of time simply because they pour over questions and waste time instead of working quickly and efficiently. More so than in any other portion of the test, time is of the essence. Therefore, you should not allow any one question to consume so much time that you run out of time for the rest of the questions. You should skip questions you do not know and come back to them after you have been through the test once. You must closely monitor your time and use the final minute of the test time to fill in the remaining blanks on the answer sheet with the letter chosen as the guess response; and 4) As you take the Reading Comprehension Section of the tests, you should not become discouraged by not remembering something or thinking you should know more. Becoming discouraged is not only counter-productive, but also a waste of time: such distractions encourage you to perform poorly. Instead, you should do your best and move on: if you stop to berate yourself, you will soon have plenty to berate yourself about, for you will do badly on the test. (Forster et al., 1997, p. 120)

In the Reading Comprehension sections of the TOEIC and the TOEFL, it is important to recognize factual questions that ask specific things about the text in a straightforward way. Often, these types of questions do not use the same language that was used in the passage: instead of using key words, the questions will re-word, or restate, the information. These types of questions come in three general categories: basic facts, excluded facts, and computational facts.

Questions about basic facts ask direct questions about the passage. These types of questions require you to demonstrate a basic understanding of the passage by restating the information presented. These types of questions usually begin with the words, "what," "when," "which," "who," "why," and "how," but may begin with phrases such as: "According to the author..."; "According to the (reading or type of document)..."; "Of the following..."; "If (existing situation), what, etc. ...results?"; and question containing the words "most" or "most likely."

All of these types of questions demand that one pick specific information out of the passage and understand it well enough to be able to recognize it in other words. Obviously, a good working knowledge of synonyms is handy, but in any case, you should always be prepared to use the process of elimination to arrive at the correct answer.

Questions about excluded facts require that you choose from the possible answers the one answer that was not mentioned or discussed, or the answer that is least likely to be correct or included in a given set of criteria. These questions always include the words "NOT," "EXCEPT," or "LEAST." For example, questions of this kind may include: "All of the following are vital EXCEPT...?" and "Which of the following is NOT mentioned as...?" To determine the correct answer, you must use the process of elimination to decide which fact is not mentioned or least important, etc.

Questions about computational facts require that you do some quick math to solve a problem and are generally more common in the TOEIC than in the TOEFL. These types of questions usually include words such as "cost" or "total" or begin with a phrase such as "how much"; for example: "What is the cost to consumers for...?"; "What would be the total expense for the purchase of ...?"; and "How much more would it be to purchase...?" These questions do not require the use of any sophisticated mathematics; rather, they test your understanding of the information presented by making you demonstrate the relationships presented. For example, "If X costs so much, how much will 5 X cost?" (Forster et al., 1997, p. 122)

Both the TOEIC and the TOEFL often ask questions about the "main idea" of a reading passage. Main idea/best title questions demand that you consider a passage as a whole to arrive at a main idea of, or best title for, the passage. You must recognize an answer that is a summary of, or closely related to, the factual information presented in the passage. These types of questions include words such as: "main point," "mainly discuss," "main idea," "main purpose," or "main topic." Phrases indicating these types of questions include: "What is the purpose of ...?"; "Why was...?"; "What is the main idea of....?" and "Which of the following is the best title for...?" It is very important that you do not confuse answers regarding possible inferences with the correct "main idea/best title" answer. In addition, you must consider the possible answers very carefully. Wrong answers may be too general, too vague, or too specific to be correct. (Forster et al., 1997, p. 129)

One of the hardest tasks on both the TOEIC and the TOEFL is inferencing. Inference questions demand that you consider the facts in a passage and demonstrate an understanding of what it means or suggests without the benefit of the required information being openly stated. You must draw a conclusion based on the facts presented in the passage. These types of questions include words such as "why," "likely," or "probably," or phrases such as: "It can be inferred from the passage that _____." Aside from the difficulties involved with drawing a conclusion from the reading, these types of questions, particularly in the TOEFL, often use words that have several meanings. It is not unusual for the text to use a word as a noun, and the possible answers to use the same word in another context, such as a verb; in fact, you must consider the answer using the same word as another part of speech very carefully because it is often the correct choice. When considering possible answers, you must not get side-tracked by answers which are not logical inferences; sometimes, wrong answers are so far off-topic that they are ludicrous but manage to be distracting. (Forster et al., p. 136)

Communicative Activities for the TOEIC/TOEFL Listening Comprehension Sections

One challenge the ESL/EFL instructor faces in teaching students to prepare for the TOEIC or the TOEFL test is to improve not only their test score, but also their overall English language communicative competency. Of course, some TOEIC/TOEFL classes dictate that only test-preparation should be taught, practiced and studied. However, if time and curriculum permits, both the TOEIC and the TOEFL Listening Comprehension sections provide a variety of opportunities for communicative activities. In fact, utilizing such activities in the classroom might actually help the students achieve higher test scores because they will be more familiar with, and confident about, the test if they have actually used language from the test.

More so than the TOEFL, the Listening Comprehension Section of the TOEIC provides a wealth of possible communicative activities. For example, in Part I of the TOEIC, you must answer questions based on a photograph. To aid students in answering these kinds of questions, the following activities can be employed: 1) The instructor can show the class various photographs and call on students to answer "who," "what," "when," "where," "why," and "how" questions--this forces students to verbalize what they "see" in the photographs and helps them make a "mental list" that is necessary to effectively answer the questions; 2) Students work in groups of two and ask each other "wh" questions about photographs provided by the instructor. These photographs can be photocopied and each group can work on the same photographs which can later be reviewed individually by the instructor and the class; 3) The instructor can have students bring their own photographs to class. Working in groups of three or four, students ask and answer "wh" questions about the photographs. When they are finished, each group can share and ask questions about their photographs with other groups in the class; and 4) Students can share their "favorite" photograph with the class, explaining why it's their favorite photograph. The instructor and/or individual students can ask the student "wh" questions about the photograph.

Part II of the TOEIC contains question/response problems which can be utilized in the following communicative activities: 1) The instructor asks students a variety of "information" questions: "who," "what," "where," "when" and "how"; "choice" questions: "either...or" and "neither...nor"; "frequency" questions such as: "How often do you _____?"; and

"yes/no tag" questions: "_____, doesn't she? isn't he?" etc.; 2) In a "quiz show" format, students ask each other "information," "choice," "frequency" and "yes/no tag" questions. The instructor can review each student's answer; 3) Finally, in a "Jeopardy" format, the instructor provides the answers and the students provide the questions.

Part III of the TOEIC and Part A of the TOEFL contain short conversations, which, by their very nature, provide a multitude of opportunities for students to practice using the English found in the tests. These activities include: 1) The instructor provides notecards to pairs of students containing dialogues from the TOEIC or the TOEFL. The students practice the dialogue and the instructor asks a question about the conversation and calls on individual students for the answer, checking for correctness and explaining any inappropriate responses; 2) The instructor asks students a question. For example: "Why does the man say he was late?" The students work in pairs and create short conversations which they "perform" in front of the class. The instructor can then call on individual students for correct answers to the questions and explain incorrect answers; 4) The instructor divides the class into five groups. Group 1 creates conversations related to time that include: "when," "how often" (frequency) and "length/duration" information. Group 2 creates conversations that convey what someone "wants" or "means." Group 3 creates conversations related to "motivation" and "reasons" (why someone did or wants to do something). Group 4 creates conversations containing "suggestions" such as "Why don't you _____?" Group 5 creates conversations related to "exact spelling," "number," and/or "location." Each group then "acts out" their conversation and the instructor listens and asks individual students and/or groups appropriate TOEIC/TOEFL-type questions about the conversations. In addition, students or groups can ask each other appropriate questions about what they have heard. Again, incorrect answers can be explained by the instructor and/or the students.

Part B of the TOEFL contains longer conversations which can also be used in the following communicative activities: 1) Students work in groups of two and create four-part (A-B-A-B) conversations that utilize idioms and patterned expressions provided by the instructor. The instructor then asks the students and/or the groups "what," "relationship," "frequency," and "which" questions; 2) Students work in groups of three in which two students create

longer conversations (Student A: 6 parts; Student B: 5 parts). Student C asks the class four questions related to "what," "frequency," and "means of transportation"; 3) The instructor provides groups of two students with idioms and patterned expressions. Students create conversations utilizing these idioms and patterned expressions and the instructor asks the class about the conversations they have heard.

Part IV of the TOEIC and Part C of the TOEFL contain short talks and lectures which can also be turned into the following communicative activities: 1) The instructor reads or plays recordings of commercial advertisements, public service announcements, and news stories related to the TOEIC, and academic-related announcements, lectures, and explanations related to the TOEFL. The instructor then asks individual students and/or groups questions about the "main idea/subject," "facts" and "conditions," "purpose," "prediction," and "exclusion," i.e. "What did NOT happen/occur?" or "What was NOT mentioned?"; 2) The instructor provides groups of two or three students with four questions and students create short talks based on the questions. Each group reads their short talks and asks other groups their questions. The instructor can check the accuracy of the responses to the questions; and 3) Working individually or in groups, students prepare and present to the class advertisements/commercials for various products using visual aids. The instructor and/or groups of students ask various questions about the presentations. Again, the instructor can check the accuracy of the students' questions as well as their responses.

In all of the above activities, students are given the opportunity to use the English in situations found in both the TOEIC and the TOEFL. Having students create their own questions, dialogues, short talks, and lectures, etc. enables them to build their confidence in English which will ultimately serve them well when they actually take either test.

Communicative Activity for the TOEIC/TOEFL Structure, Written Expression & Reading Comprehension Section

Although the majority of communicative activities are derived from the listening comprehension sections of the TOEIC and the TOEFL, there is an entymology exercise that can enhance students understanding of Part VI of the TOEIC and Section 2, Part B of the TOEFL. In order to make this a communicative exercise, students should sit in pairs and use their

knowledge of prefixes, roots and suffixes to try to identify the part of speech of the following list of words: 1) "finite," 2) "infinite," 3) "infinity," 4) "infinitive," 5) "define," 6) "definite," 7) "definitive," 8) "definable," 9) "indefinable," 10) "finish," 11) "refinish," 12) "final," 13) "finalist," and 14) "finalize."

Next, students should try to guess the meanings of the words without using their dictionaries. After finishing this activity in 15-minutes or less, the students write their answers on the chalkboard. Afterwards, the instructor discusses the answers with the students, pointing out that the words all share the root "fin," which means "end," "settle," or "limit." It should be noted that numbers 4 and 11, "infinitive" and "refinish," are "ringers" which are included in the exercise to remind students that using prefixes, roots, and suffixes to guess a word's meaning is not foolproof. Instead, it is simply another tool to add to their test-taking arsenal.

The benefits of the above exercise are many. First, students gain practice in recognizing parts of speech by their suffixes, which is helpful in recognizing word form errors. Second, this exercise encourages students to guess the correct answer, something many students, particularly Asian students, are often reluctant to do. Finally, an added benefit is that this exercise helps build and reinforce students' vocabulary--perhaps one of the most important keys to success in taking the TOEIC and the TOEFL--as well as improving their overall communicative ability in English.

Conclusion

As can be seen from this paper, the importance of the TOEIC and the TOEFL tests cannot be denied, particularly in Asia. In fact, the Educational Testing Service expects the number of applicants to continue to grow and both tests, particularly the TOEFL, will continue to evolve and change into the next century. According to the article, "Computer-based Testing Program":

> In July, 1998, the TOEFL program introduced computerized testing in the United States, Canada, Latin America, Europe, the Middle East, Africa, Australia, and some Asian countries. Additional areas will be phased in over the next three years. The move to computer-based testing allows for several important enhancements to the

> TOEFL test: assessment that is better tailored to each test-taker's ability level because examinees spend less time answering questions that are too easy or too difficult; fewer test questions than with traditional paper-based tests; year-round testing in many locations; more individualized testing environment; faster score reporting (within two weeks of testing); and the addition of an essay with every test administration. (TOEFL Test and Score Data Summary, 1997, p. 8)

Because of these changes, TOEFL-related preparation materials will have to evolve and change as well to meet the needs of the students studying for the test. However, we believe that the strategies presented above will also benefit students who take the computer-based TOEFL exam.

The number of applicants wishing to take the TOEIC exam will also continue to grow as the ever-shrinking global economy makes English competency necessary for success in business, particularly in Asia. According to David Wells in "Mixing Language Study and Culture": "Since it is so important to their career advancement, students are often eager to take the TOEIC test." (Reporter, 1998, p. 4)

Finally, we have found that teaching TOEIC and TOEFL test-taking strategies, as well as the communicative activities explained earlier, does in fact improve student test scores. According to a survey conducted last year at four Japanese universities by Richard Karn, co-author of *Strategies 1: Building TOEIC/TOEFL Test-taking Skills*, student test scores did improve an average of 15.85 percent in elective classes and 10.4 percent in required courses. In addition, students' familiarity with the tests improved by 27 percent; their knowledge of general test-taking strategies improved by 21 percent; their ability to read ahead and recognize different question types improved by 18 percent; and students' willingness to guess improved by 14 percent (Karn et al., 1998).

We would like to stress once again that studying for the TOEIC will help improve TOEFL scores and vice versa. But more importantly, when taught together, both the TOEIC and the TOEFL can be used to improve students' overall English language ability; and that, in our opinion, should be the ultimate goal of any course of English language study.

References

Educational Testing Service. (1997-98). Computer-based testing program. TOEFL test and score data summary . Princeton, NJ: Author.

_____. (1997). Overview. TOEFL test & score manual Princeton, NJ: Author.

_____. (1997-98). Table 9: TOEFL total and section score means--all examinees classified by native language. TOEFL test and score data summary. Princeton, NJ: Author.

_____. (1997). Updates. TOEIC Service International Reporter, (No. 24). Princeton, NJ: Author.

_____. (1997). Use of TOEFL test scores. TOEFL test & score manual. Princeton, NJ: Author.

Forster, D., Karn, R., Suzuki, S. & Tateyama, T. (1997). Strategies 1: Building TOEIC/TOEFL test-taking skills. Tokyo: Aratake Publishing Co., Ltd.

Karn, R. & Forster, D. (1998, March 20). "Teaching TOEIC/TOEFL test-taking strategies" [Presentation]. Seattle, WA: TESOL '98: 32nd Annual Convention and Exposition.

TOEIC assesses English language skills with accuracy. (1997, April 1). The Daily Yomiuri, p. 9.

TOEIC: Key gauge of communication skills. (1997, September 25). The Daily Yomiuri, p. 11.

Wells, D. (1998). Mixing language study and culture in New Zealand. Reporter, (No. 25). Princeton, NJ: TOEIC Service International.